



Restaurants
in the

Berkeley

Lucille
Poskanzer

Introduction 0

This is a selected list of restaurants in the Berkeley area written by Lucille Poskanzer, produced by Art Poskanzer, with help from their sons Harold for the cover design and Jef for the maps in the web version. We began this in 1978 and it has been on the Web (<http://www-RNC.lbl.gov/Restaurants/>) since early 1995. The authors alone are responsible for the information provided and the opinions expressed.

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New 1

Since the last revision the following restaurants are **new**: Albany Bistro, Bendean, Café Cacao, Eccollo, Gioia Pizzeria, and Tandoor Kitchen. The following are **newly included**: Cheese Board Pizza and China Village. The following have **closed**: none. Turnover is frequent, so it is always wise to check ahead. Many close early on Sunday and are closed on Monday.

2

South Side

Unicorn 3

2533 Telegraph Ave. at Blake 841-8098

Not far from campus, but difficult to see because of a poorly lit sign, this small jewel of a bistro features Asian Fusion food, influenced by Viet Nam, Malaysia, and the Chao Zhou region of southern China, with many vegetarian choices. Nicely decorated, with an intimate upscale atmosphere and friendly service, the prices are moderate. The "two person minimum" combinations are a really good deal! Worth a try, for sure.

Tandor Kitchen 4

2598 Telegraph Ave. near Parker 843-3951

Informal in the extreme, full of students at all hours, open throughout the day until late at night, this new Indian-Pakistani place is worth a try for something different. You order at the counter, and then wait until wonderful flavorful breads, curries, or tandoori dishes are brought to you at your table. The prices are really low, there's no beer or wine, and lots of people order takeout. The lamb chops are especially great, and there are many vegetarian choices too.

Kirala 5

2100 Ward St. on Shattuck 549-3486

This is a very popular Japanese restaurant, with a sake bar and robata grill. The decor is modern, the service quick, and the food excellent and expensive. It offers a very large selection of wonderful sushi, small plates of grilled food, as well as more traditional choices. There's a lively eclectic crowd, and the noise level gets high when this place is crowded, which is most of the time.

Zax Tavern 6

2826 Telegraph Ave. at Oregon 848-9299

Relocating from its original North Beach location, this California Bistro is a welcome addition to an area lacking good restaurants. The appetizers are uniformly terrific, main dishes hearty but more variable, reflecting freshness and seasonality. The food prices are upscale as is the wine. The atmosphere is young, lively, and somewhat noisy. There's a large full bar also. The service is attentive and knowledgeable. Popular, so reserve ahead.

Shen Hua 7

2914 College Ave. north of Ashby 883-1777

This is a large modern Chinese restaurant in the Elmwood area. It is usually crowded and noisy, but it offers a varied menu with many unusual dishes, and the cooking level is high. The daily specials are worth a try. The atmosphere is welcoming. The prices are definitely upscale, but this does not keep the crowds away. Open for lunch, also.

La Mediterranee 8

2936 College Ave. north of Ashby 540-7773

Middle Eastern food in the Elmwood, inexpensive, good for families. Open for lunch and dinner. There is a street-side patio which is heated and can be very pleasant in the evenings or late mornings. The food is quite tasty, the service quick and friendly. The lamb and chicken dishes are nicely spiced. There are lots of vegetarian choices, too. This place gets very crowded on weekend nights, so there is often a wait.

Rick and Ann's 9

2922 Domingo St. opposite Claremont Hotel 649-8538

A very informal American place for great breakfasts, good lunches, and decent dinners. Outdoor tables for sunny days. Prices moderate. This is a good place for families with children, since the choices range from hamburgers to more sophisticated fare. The classic dishes on the main menu are preferable to the specials.

Locanda Olmo

10

2985 College Ave. south of Ashby

848-5544

The name means Elm Inn, and this small, narrow two level storefront restaurant is in the lively Elmwood area. The eclectic Italian menu features wonderful appetizers and main dishes, lasagna, risotto, and unusual pastas. Prices are moderate and the welcome warm. The tables are close together, and the atmosphere is lively. When it's crowded, it gets pretty noisy and the service can lag. Credit cards not accepted.

Trattoria La Siciliana

11

2993 College Ave. south of Ashby

704-1474

Another Italian addition to "restaurant row" in Elmwood, this small two level storefront cafe is hugely popular, very noisy, and generally has a line out the door waiting for tables. What draws the crowds are large portions of hearty garlic infused pastas, along with salads, antipasti, and meat and fish dishes. The prices are moderate, and everyone is robustly friendly. Credit cards are not accepted. Open for dinner only.

12

Downtown**TukTukThai**

13

2466 Shattuck Ave. at Haste

540-6360

In a large and airy storefront space, not far from downtown theaters and shopping is this inexpensive informal Thai cafe. The large menu features food that is delicious, fresh and tasty, the service is prompt and friendly, and there are lots of vegetarian choices. A great feature is the fact that they are open daily until very late, which makes it one of the few places to get a meal after midnight. It's not haute cuisine, but a midnight on a Sunday night, who cares!

La Note

14

2377 Shattuck Ave. south of Durant

843-1535

A charming provencal cafe, open for breakfast, lunch, and weekend brunch, with dinner on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. The food reflects quality ingredients, with lovely French accents. Salads are delicious. Sandwiches and main entrees are moderately priced, although dinner "specials" are more expensive. A small wine list, fairly priced. Tables well spaced, lovely background music, good service. A peaceful sunny patio out back is ideal for lunch or brunch.

Venus

15

2327 Shattuck Ave. north of Durant

540-5950

This very informal brick walled cafe offers healthy American breakfasts and eclectic lunches, with a moderately priced small menu, offering a variety of delicious soups, salads, and heartier fare. At dinner time the menu expands and the prices increase for both food and wine. The service is personal and friendly. There is a good selection of vegetarian fare. Located near downtown theaters, this can be noisy when crowded, but no one seems to mind.

Hua-Hin

16

2190 Bancroft Way at Oxford

548-1322

A Thai restaurant close to campus, this relative of Northside's Cha Am offers a huge variety of dishes, all of them with complex and delicate spicing. Prices are quite moderate except for the specials, which are high end for this cuisine. Especially good for large parties, with two areas that can provide some privacy from other diners. Service is quick and friendly. This is a good choice for something different in the downtown area.

Beckett's Irish Pub

17

2271 Shattuck Ave. near Bancroft

647-1790

This is a terrific two story Irish pub and restaurant in the heart of downtown Berkeley. The decor is inviting and warm, with portraits of famous Irishmen looking down from the walls. Many of the friendly staff speak with a charming brogue, and service is quick. The selection of beers is wonderful, the moderately priced food traditional, hearty and decent. There is often Irish music, the crowd is lively, and everyone has a great time. Open late.

Great China

18

2115 Kittredge St. btw. Oxford and Shattuck

843-7996

A small Chinese restaurant with many choices, unusual special items and moderate prices. This is popular with Asian students. Near the downtown theaters, often very crowded and noisy, service can be slow and disorganized. But you will find dishes here that you cannot find elsewhere, so be patient and understanding, and you will be rewarded. If you don't mind crowds, this is a good place for lunch, with low prices and generous servings.

Mel's Diner

19

2240 Shattuck Ave. at Kittredge

540-6351

A great location for an old fashioned favorite. Open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and one of the very few places in downtown Berkeley open late. Go after a movie, select some 50's songs on the juke box, have a milk shake with your burger and fries, and wallow in nostalgia. The food is simple, generous, and good value for the money. The onion crisps are special. This is not the place for an intimate date, but kids and teenagers love it.

Cancún 20
 2134 Allston Way btw. Oxford and Shattuck 549-0964

A downtown favorite of many, this extremely informal Mexican cafe offers a wide variety of generously portioned inexpensive food. The fish burritos are especially good here. You order at the counter, and service is quick. A plus is the serve yourself salsa bar, with a large choice of sauces of varying spiciness. This place can get very crowded and noisy at lunch when the hordes of students descend, so go at an off hour or for dinner!

Jupiter 21
 2181 Shattuck Ave. 843-8277

A multi-tap beer house and restaurant, located close to campus and downtown theaters, this two level cafe is in a historic Berkeley building. There is a lovely patio out back, which is a great choice for lunch. The food can be quite variable, but it's not very expensive. Most people order one of the interesting pizzas. The beers change constantly, and usually feature lesser known local brews. Live music is offered at various times, with no cover charge. When crowded, this place is very noisy.

Santa Fe Bistro 22
 2142 Center St. btw. Oxford and Shattuck 841-4047

In the heart of downtown, close to campus and theaters is this delightful French bistro, complete with outdoor tables. The cooking is quite wonderful, prices moderately high. This is a good place for a great quick lunch, since you order and pay at the counter, and within a short time you are feasting. Dinner brings friendly and competent table service. Atmosphere is informal but sophisticated. Do not pass up this terrific place! Closed Sundays.

Raphael 23
 2132 Center St. btw. Oxford and Shattuck 644-9500

A great addition to the downtown area, this restaurant's menu features Italian food that is also Kosher. Everything is delicious, the service friendly and knowledgeable, although sometimes slow, the atmosphere noisy and lively, and the prices wonderfully moderate for the quality of the food. You definitely do not miss the lack of meat on the menu! The house wine is really good, too. This place is highly recommended, and definitely worth a try.

Le Régal 24
 2126 Center St. btw. Oxford and Shattuck 845-4020

Very close to campus, this storefront restaurant has very good moderately priced Vietnamese cuisine. The menu features a wide variety of dishes with many choices of soups, salads, noodles and rice plates, all of them tasty. The decor is warm and inviting. The service is friendly. It is justly popular at lunchtime, and is also recommended for a simple dinner before going on to one of the nearby theaters.

Downtown 25
 2102 Shattuck Ave. at Addison 649-3810

A large and very handsome restaurant, bringing a welcome bit of glamour to the Berkeley theater district. The food is Mediterranean inspired, the cooking is excellent, and there's a raw bar for seafood lovers. The menu prices are quite high end, as is the wine. There's often music later in the evenings, and a bar for "hanging out". Open for lunch most weekdays, this is a terrific addition to the downtown scene.

La Rose Bistro 26
 2037 Shattuck Ave. near Addison 644-1913

In a small two level storefront, close to the University and convenient to downtown, you will find this charming place. The cooking is California Asian Fusion, and it is quite good, with nice moderate prices too. Open for lunch and dinner, the atmosphere is quiet, the tables nicely spaced, the service friendly. This is a place to think of for a fine lunch, as well as before going on to the theater or a downtown movie.

Taiwan 27
 2071 University Ave. below Shattuck 845-1456

Chinese, with some unusual country dishes on the large menu. This is a good place for a very inexpensive lunch, close to campus. Open late every night -- one of the few places to go when everything else has closed. Also, weekend Chinese brunch is a specialty. This is a popular place for takeout food, with convenient parking out the back door, in the city lot.

Zatar 28
 1981 Shattuck Ave. north of University 841-1981

In a beautifully decorated narrow storefront close to campus you will find this small quiet restaurant featuring large portions of assertively spiced Mediterranean cuisine. The main dishes offer enticing combinations, unusual and tasty. Entrees are expensive, wines even more so. Less expensive delicious sangria is an alternative drink choice. Lunch prices are lower, but still high end. Service informal and friendly. No credit cards.

Triple Rock Brewery 29
 1920 Shattuck Ave. one block north of Univ. 843-2739

A busy hangout not far from campus. Beer and ale made on the premises. The Pub food is surprisingly good -- excellent sandwiches and great soups and chili at lunch, more substantial grub at dinner. Nothing too expensive, and very informal. Open every day. In warm weather the "rooftop garden" is popular. One of the first of the brewery cafes in the area, it is one of the most successful -- be prepared for crowds, noise, and sports on the TV.

Liaison

30

1849 Shattuck Ave. at Hearst

849-2155

An instant success, this French bistro is located close to campus. The decor is authentically charming, the service professional and warm, food prices moderate, wine prices high. This place offers delicious brasserie food, along with onion soup, oysters and mussels. Portion sizes vary with the menu choice, so ask before ordering. When crowded, this place is pretty noisy. Reservations recommended. Open for lunch also. A favorite of mine.

Le Théâtre

31

1919 Addison St. in a courtyard

644-1707

Off the beaten path, somewhat difficult to find, but close to downtown theaters is this charming restaurant with a French menu. There is a fairly high priced wine list but the menu prices are moderate. The decor is cozy and warm, the service solicitous, and it is quiet enough for an intimate conversation. The cooking is very good, and well worth a try.

Chaat Cafe

32

1902 University Ave. at Martin Luther King

845-1431

This informal storefront cafe is hugely popular, especially at lunch. It features a wide variety of very tasty inexpensive Indian "small plates", along with a selection of Indian sandwiches, breads, salads, and a daily choice of larger plates accompanied by rice and naan. Beer and wine are available also. You order at the counter and the food is brought to your table. The inexpensive lunch prices last until 5 pm, so it's a great place for a cheap early dinner!

33

West Side**Venezia**

34

1799 University Ave. at Grant

849-4681

This lively Italian restaurant is a Berkeley favorite. The menu features pasta with a number of delicious and varied sauces, all moderately priced. There is a daily selection of chicken, meat or fish dishes, but it's the pasta that you should eat here. This place can get pretty noisy at times. Dinner reservations are accepted, and children welcomed. It's open also for lunch and Sunday brunch. There is a private back room, good for a large group.

Pomegranate

35

1585 University Ave. above Sacramento

665-5567

In a space that has seen a number of restaurants come and go, this restaurant has a large menu comprising a variety of appetizers and sandwiches, pastas, pizzas, and Mediterranean "specialties". Stick with the Mediterranean food, and you will have a tasty fairly inexpensive meal. Atmosphere friendly, service informal. Open for both lunch and dinner. This place is worth a try, despite the out of the way location.

Bosphorus

36

1025 University Ave. below San Pablo

549-9997

Located in the area that is referred to as "Little India", this is the only restaurant in Berkeley offering Anatolian cuisine, which is somewhat Turkish, somewhat Indian, and always interesting and different. The cooking is not of the highest caliber, but it is good, and the prices are low. Most people opt for the extensive buffet, which is a deal, but I would recommend some of the a la carte items. For not very much money you can have a new experience in Berkeley!

Genki

37

1610 San Pablo Ave. at Cedar

524-1465

Located in an out of the way spot, next to a motel, this Japanese restaurant and sushi bar is worth the trip. Nondescript decor, extremely simple atmosphere, but the food is really good, the service friendly, and the prices moderate. The menu features a large selection of sushi. The sashimi and tempura are fine, too, and there is usually a large choice of daily specials. Often crowded and popular with families. Easy parking in the motel lot.

Vanni

38

1096 Dwight Way just west of San Pablo

843-3646

In an out of the way location, this storefront restaurant is a lovely surprise. Tastefully decorated, it is an enclave in which to enjoy delicious inventive Thai food with the chef's special creative touches. Prices are moderate, service friendly and unobtrusive, and tables far enough apart so that you can easily have a quiet conversation. It is definitely worth a try.

Juan's Place

39

941 Carleton St.

845-6904

Berkeley's favorite down home Mexican cafe -- all the standards plus friendly atmosphere -- tables are often shared. Lively, noisy local crowd. Large portions, low prices, informal service. A Berkeley institution, so don't expect innovations.

Café Cacao 40
 914 Heinz Ave. 843-6000

In an out of the way location, within the Scharffen Berger chocolate factory, you will find this new cafe, open for breakfast, lunch and dinner, with pastries and drinks throughout the day. There's a shady patio too. The decoration is industrial chic, with high ceilings and exposed rafters. The food is tasty and fresh, although the dinner menu is limited and the prices are high end. Do make a trip to the restroom, where the aroma of chocolate is enchanting.

Bucci's 41
 6121 Hollis St. in Emeryville 547-4725

Emeryville has many wonderful cafes and restaurants. This is one of them -- great Italian pizza, pasta, small dishes, desserts and salads. Nightly specials are usually terrific. Prices are moderately high, and the atmosphere "with it" and sophisticated. Portions are generous. The decor is trendy, the service professional. When there's a crowd, this place can get pretty noisy, but that's part of the charm. Parking available in the adjacent lot.

Emeryville Market 42
 5800 Shellmound in Emeryville

Across from the Amtrak station is this terrific, crowded complex of a multiplex movie theater, a huge food hall with a wide variety of interesting inexpensive ethnic cuisines, a great Jazz performance club, a large book and record store, and more. Go for lunch and join the crowds from the nearby software firms. The location is also not far from IKEA and Trader Joe's, so you can escape from shopping. A good place for families with children. Lots of parking.

Bay Street Emeryville 43
 off Shellmound St. in Emeryville

An upscale complex, featuring a multiplex movie theater, a huge book store, a large number of specialty shops, and a Friday farmer's market. There's also a lovely complex of restaurants in a sunny balcony area, with a wealth of food choices all at moderate prices. One of the best is the Zao Noodle Bar, but Rubio's Baja Grill is good for fish tacos too. Try it for an informal meal before or after shopping and a movie. Big parking garage.

Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto 44
 1919 4th St. just north of University 845-7771

Refurbished and restored, this old favorite has a huge menu and a daily "fresh list" of fish. Some menu items from the old Spenger's remain, but the emphasis now is definitely upscale, and reservations are necessary. The ancient waiters are gone and service is now friendly. The food is marginally better, the vegetables crisply cooked, but nothing warrants the high end prices. No matter, it is usually crowded.

O Chame 45
 1830 4th St. 841-8783

A favorite of many in Berkeley, this restaurant resembles an exquisitely decorated Inn, with carefully prepared classic Japanese country cuisine, some unusual appetizers, and artistic presentation. The menu is small, featuring inexpensive large bowls of noodles with varying healthy ingredients, and a few more expensive special choices of grilled meat or fish. The quality of the latter is superb, but be aware that the portions are modest.

Eccolo 46
 1820 4th St. 644-0444

Part of the Fourth Street Shopping Experience, this is a new restaurant in the old location of Ginger Island. Christopher Lee, a former chef at Chez Panisse, is the chef-owner. The very limited menu reflects high quality seasonal ingredients, cooked with elegance. Portions are somewhat small, prices for food and wine are high, and not all the menu choices are winners. The space is lovely, service friendly and professional. It is a popular place, and should improve over time. We wish it well.

Bette's Ocean View Diner 47
 1807A 4th St. 644-3230

Great '40s atmosphere complete with noisy juke box and plastic counters. Good fresh food, terrific American breakfasts and lunches. Not open for dinner. Located near a hugely popular array of interesting shops and discount stores to explore before or after a meal. Nearby is Betty's "To Go" where you can pick up all kinds of wonderful food when you are on the run.

Café Rouge 48
 1782 4th St., but enter on the side street 525-1440

This lively and noisy restaurant features an oyster bar and California eclectic cuisine, emphasizing excellent meat. There is an in-house butcher shop, a connecting wine shop, and a pasta shop. The menu is high priced and the wines expensive. One of the most popular items is the more reasonably priced hamburger. Located in an upscale complex of shops, which is definitely an "in" place in Berkeley. Parking lot and entrance are on the side street.

Tacubaya 49
 1788 4th St., but enter on the side street 525-5160

Hidden away in a side corner of the Pasta Shop, in the popular Fourth Street Complex is this upscale "order at the counter" Mexican cafe. It's an informal branch of Oakland's Dona Thomas, and features a wide choice of "small plates". Open only for breakfast and lunch, the food is truly delicious, carefully and artfully prepared. Beware, though, ordering a substantial meal can result in quite a high bill. The atmosphere is charming and lively, the service quick and pleasant.

Skates on the Bay

50

100 Seawall Drive at Berkeley Marina 549-1900

Lively bar, beautiful view. A huge restaurant with a varied menu -- something for everyone, but pricey. Go for drinks and the sunset, not for the food. This is popular for families and young dating couples. Wide variety of beers. Serves late at night when other places are closed, but check first before going.

North Side

52

Euclid and Hearst

In a quiet, unhurried area at the north edge of campus can be found a number of cafes and small ethnic restaurants, all of them informal, unassuming, and inexpensive. Some are clustered around a sunny deck, nice for an informal lunch. You can find pizzas, burritos, crepes, falafel, hot dogs, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, and Korean cooking, as well as soup and sandwiches, and a decent espresso cafe.

Café de la Paz

54

1600 Shattuck Ave. at Cedar 843-0662

This upstairs restaurant features the cooking of Latin America, and it now has its own separate entrance near a complex of shops and cafes. Wonderful tapas, and a good selection of unusual dishes, with good vegetarian choices. Atmosphere is light and airy, sometimes noisy. Tables are close together. The service is friendly and you can take the children. Downstairs there is a private space available for large groups.

Grégoire

56

2109 Cedar St. above Shattuck 883-1893

A very small storefront with a picnic table outside, this is a place for upscale take out lunch and dinner. It is enormously popular. Everything is fresh and tasty, and the varied menu offerings change with the seasons. The prices are quite high end for take out, although the quality is good. You can call ahead and bring your choices home in an esthetically pleasing box, or sit outside and join the happy people munching away. Recommended if you don't mind the prices!

Chez Panisse

58

1517 Shattuck Ave. north of Cedar 548-5525

California-French, emphasizing fresh organic food, this can be superb or merely uniquely special, depending on the set menu for the night. Good wine list. Very very expensive. Reservations imperative, far in advance, although the menu is known only one week ahead. This has become world famous, and the prices reflect the fame. There is a somewhat lower-priced set dinner on Monday nights, which can be quite wonderful, although it is still rather expensive.

Chez Panisse Upstairs Café

59

1517 Shattuck Ave. north of Cedar 548-5049

Light, bright, lively, more casual dining than downstairs. Great for pizzas, soups, salads, and more sophisticated substantial fare. Everything is quite delicious. Open for lunch, dinner and later. Upscale prices, excellent professional service. Reservations are generally required. All Berkeley seems to convene here at one time or another.

North Side

51

Thai Delight

53

1700 Shattuck Ave. just south of Virginia 549-0611

Located in an unassuming storefront, this friendly Thai restaurant features organic vegetables and hormone-free meat in all of its dishes. The atmosphere is quiet, the tables well spaced, and the menu has all the standards plus a few unusual and delicious items also. If kabocha squash curry or tempura crabs are on the menu, order them! This is a good place for lunch as well as for takeout. Prices moderate.

Barney's Hamburgers

55

1600 Shattuck Ave., on Cedar 849-2827

A branch of a popular chain (others are on Solano Ave., and on College Ave. just north of Rockridge BART). Good for huge hamburgers with all kinds of toppings, soups, large salads, milk shakes, wine and beer. The french fries are terrific, and a half-order is plenty! There's an outdoor patio for sunny days.

Cha Am

57

1543 Shattuck Ave. near Cedar 848-9664

Small charming restaurant featuring Thai food, excellently done. The spicing is more complex and delicate here than in other Thai restaurants. The daily specials are often superb. Very popular and often crowded, so be prepared for a wait. This is also a good place for "take out." Open both for lunch and dinner, this is still one of my favorites.

César 60
 1515 Shattuck Ave. next to Chez Panisse 883-0222

North Berkeley's place to see and be seen, this tapas bar is part of the Chez Panisse "family", and it is very popular. There's a limited menu, with Spanish influenced "small plates", each moderately priced. Do not pass up the fried potatoes! There's a huge list of cocktails, very well priced wines, beers, sherries, and other drinks. The space is beautiful. It's a lively, noisy, and popular place, so join the crowd. Open daily for lunch and dinner late into the night.

Bistro Lucille 61
 Berkeley near Tilden Park unlisted

Really good food available at all hours of the day and night, emphasizing freshness, creativity, and the warmth of the chef. After the chef spent a month in Paris the sophistication has increased further. The menu is California French but caters to all tastes. The wine list is limited but well priced. The portions are generous and diners are urged to take home leftovers. Everyone, including children, love this place. Unfortunately dining is only by personal invitation of the chef.

Cheese Board Pizza 62
 1512 Shattuck Ave. south of Vine 549-3055

Follow the crowds lined up at lunchtime in front of this newly included Berkeley institution. What they're after is a slice or two of crisp crusted pizza fresh from the oven topped creatively and always delicious. You can order a whole pie to go, but you'd miss the unique ambiance, the piano player, the people picnicking on the grassy strip in the middle of the street. Next door is a great cheese and bread store, where you can buy the pizzas half baked.

Saul's Delicatessen 63
 1475 Shattuck Ave. north of Vine 848-3354

This is Berkeley's attempt at an East Coast Deli, and it is moderately successful. There is a huge take out counter featuring all kinds of upscale treats, as well as a large sit down area. The free half sour pickles are not as good as they used to be, but the pastrami and corned are still fine. The overstuffed sandwiches are huge. Prices are moderate. This gets very crowded on weekend mornings and before evening readings at near-by Black Oak Books.

Fat Apple's 64
 1346 Martin Luther King Way at Rose 526-2260

The place for breakfast or a hamburger and apple pie. Some people feel that they have the best brunches and burgers in town. Always a wait for a table, but the service is fast, and the waiting line moves quickly. Open until 9 pm on weeknights and Sundays, and until 10 pm on Fridays and Saturdays. In an adjoining space is a bakery with pies and pastries for sale, where you can also order anything on the menu "to go".

65

Solano Avenue

Khana Peena 66
 1889 Solano Ave. near The Alameda 528-2519

In a nicely remodeled storefront is this Indian restaurant, featuring a varied and tasty menu. The tables are close together, the service quick, and it's noisy when crowded, but it has been popular since opening day. The cooking is not especially refined, but if you know what to expect, you should enjoy the experience.

Ajanta 67
 1888 Solano Ave. near The Alameda 526-4373

This is a very fine Indian restaurant. The atmosphere is quiet, refined and elegant, and the spicing can be to your taste. Each month dishes from different regions are featured. The service is personal and warm. The location is the increasingly lively upper Solano Avenue, and it's fun to stroll and shop before or after a meal. Prices moderately high for this cuisine.

Cactus Taqueria 68
 1881 Solano Ave. 528-1881

A lively Mexican restaurant on upper Solano, this is a branch of a College Ave. restaurant. The food is fresh and inventive, with a sensitivity to health. You order at the counter, choosing from an array of delicious fillings, beans, rice, and tortillas. There is a huge choice of beers, and also coffees and soft drinks. A hit, it can get crowded and noisy, but it is great for families, and for a quick, tasty meal that is not expensive.

Zachary's Chicago Pizza 69
 1853 Solano Ave. 525-5950

Jam-packed, informal. The specialty is stuffed thick pizza but the regular pizza is the best in town according to some. Good for take out if you can get them to answer the phone -- if not, go in person and wait your turn. During the day you can buy a very inexpensive "single slice" which makes a terrific snack, or even lunch. Kids love this place. The branch on College Avenue is a neighborhood hangout -- the weekend crowds there are phenomenal.

King Tsin

70

1699 Solano Ave. below Colusa

525-9890

A favorite of loyal clientele, this family run restaurant has been updated with a clean, bright, and modern atmosphere. There's an extensive menu of delicious moderately priced Chinese food. It's very popular, and can get noisy when crowded, but the service is friendly and fast. If you have a special favorite that's not on the new menu, ask for it and they will prepare it to order. Portions are generous. This is also a great place for takeout.

Bendean

71

1647 Solano Ave., near Ventura

526-3700

A new restaurant on Solano Avenue, with a chef who has returned to the neighborhood after a few years in the city. He has created a most welcoming space, simple but warm. Personnel are outstandingly friendly. The menu is seasonal California-Mediterranean, with a few Mexican touches. Prices are high end, but the quality and the talent in the kitchen makes it all worthwhile. Popular from day one, you should reserve. This should become a winner!

Cugini

72

1556 Solano Ave.

558-9000

This small family run (Cugini means cousin) Italian restaurant is worth a try. The menu features moderately priced thin light crunchy pizzas with a variety of toppings, and an interesting choice of delicious pastas, calamari, salads, and desserts. The calzone is great! There is a daily risotto special, along with a variety of appetizers. The wines are reasonably priced. Atmosphere is convivial and noisy, service friendly. This is worth a try, for sure!

Rivoli

73

1539 Solano Ave.

526-2542

This is one of the best restaurants in town for California cuisine. The space is light and airy, the food is divine, innovative, and the prices moderately high. The waitpersons are knowledgeable, the wines well chosen, and dining here is altogether a fine experience. Reservations imperative, since it is deservedly very popular. Although the tables are close together it is still one of my personal favorites.

Fonda

74

1501-A Solano Ave. in Albany

559-9006

Quite popular, this lovely restaurant is part of the Lalime "family". It focuses on "small plates" of South of the Border cuisine, along with special cocktails, wine and beer. The atmosphere is warm, service professional and solicitous. The prices are rather high for the portion size, but the food is exquisitely prepared and very delicious. It's definitely worth a try.

Walker's Pie Shop

75

1491 Solano Ave. in Albany

525-4647

The place for '50s home style American cooking (where else can you find Jello salads today?), and a real bargain besides. No fancy decor here, the service is friendly and efficient, and everyone seems to be a regular customer. What brings in the patrons are the generous portions of good plain cooking with a slice of terrific pie for dessert. The prime rib dinner is one of the best in town.

Kathmandu

76

1410 Solano Ave. at Santa Fe in Albany

526-3222

Located in a very small storefront, this informal place features the unusual cuisine of Nepal and Tibet. The food is subtly spiced, the service friendly and unobtrusive, the prices quite moderate. The lamb dishes are especially tasty, but this is also a good place for vegetarian choices. While not especially sophisticated, it is worth a try for something different.

Albany Bistro

77

1403 Solano Ave.

528-1237

This is a new place with an East-West fusion menu, sometimes successful, sometimes not. The atmosphere is calm, the tables far apart, and the service solicitous. The restaurant is on two levels which makes for an awkward space. The food presentation is elaborate and beautiful, but it is better to stick to the more simple menu selections. A number of small plates and salads are also offered. Prices are rather high, as is the wine.

Beauregard's

78

1373 Solano Ave. in Albany

526-7200

This is a lively California Bistro, featuring a large menu of soups, salads, pastas, individual pizzas with unusual toppings, and more. The prices are moderate, the wines a little pricey. The atmosphere is casual but sophisticated, and would appeal to all ages, families included. The portions are large, so consider sharing. Service is extremely friendly and welcoming. This place deserves to be popular. Open for lunch also.

Britt-Marie's Wine Bar

79

1369 Solano Ave. in Albany

527-1314

An informal cafe, open late, featuring hearty European cuisine. The duck is an especially good deal. The prices on the regular menu items are moderate, but the specials are higher end. The wine selections are interesting, with many available by the glass. The portions are large so you can make a good light meal out of a choice of appetizers. No reservations or credit cards. Check your bill carefully. Open for lunch on most days during the week.

China Village 80
 1335 Solano Ave. 525-2285

This is a newly included Chinese restaurant, which offers both a large generic menu with the usual selections that one can find anywhere, and an exciting and spicy Szechuan menu with terrific chef's specialties that are unique. In this place, spicy means really spicy! Prices are not that high for the quality. Be adventurous and try something different here.

Solano Grill and Bar 81
 1133 Solano Ave. in Albany 525-8686

This spacious restaurant features large portions of eclectic "fusion" cuisine with beautiful presentation. There is a full bar, too. The atmosphere reflects an elegant and sophisticated touch, with friendly and knowledgeable service. A la carte prices are at the high end, but a wonderful feature is a moderately priced prix fixe menu, along with a good selection of not too expensive wines -- a good deal. Open for lunch also. Try it!

Sugata 82
 1105 Solano Ave. at San Pablo 526-3516

Small, wonderful Japanese food -- some of the best around, in my opinion. Terrific sushi bar, authentic atmosphere. The portions are larger than at other places. This is one of my favorite Japanese restaurants. You can reserve the tatami room, take off your shoes, bend your knees, and have a true Japanese experience with your meal. The prices are moderately high. This place can get crowded at peak times.

Nizza La Bella 83
 825 San Pablo Ave. just north of Solano 526-2552

This is a terrific bistro, beautifully constructed and decorated, featuring French-Nicoise food. A great addition to the neighborhood, it is deservedly popular. The service is friendly and professional. The owner is on the premises, and she has put much love and thought into having a wonderful authentic atmosphere. Prices moderately high but worth it for the quality of the food and wine. Do not pass up this place, it's a favorite of mine!

Gioia Pizzeria 84
 1586 Hopkins St., at Monterey 528-4692

A new storefront in a small busy neighborhood of shops and markets, this informal place offers really good thin crusted New York style pizza. There are drinks also, but nothing else. It's a great place for an inexpensive quick lunch. The owner is a NY native, and he knows what he likes! Besides the traditional tomato-cheese, he usually has a few more esoteric offerings, but stick with the traditional "slice" and you'll be happy. You can also get a whole "pie", but call ahead for this.

Lalime's Cafe 85
 1329 Gilman St. in Albany 527-9838

A gem, one my favorite restaurants in Berkeley. The cooking is Mediterranean-French -- everything is terrific, prices not that high for the quality. Airy space, friendly service, I always have a wonderful time here. Each month, there is a changing choice of enticing appetizers, main courses, desserts, and good wines. There are frequent special theme dinners, too. Get on the mailing list for the great monthly narratives, as well as the featured menu choices.

Pyramid Brewery 86
 901 Gilman St. below San Pablo 528-9880

An instant hit, this huge place features a variety of wonderful Beers and Ales, and a large and varied menu of mostly decent, well priced food. Industrial chic decor, with a two level warehouse sized dining area, a lively bar, and a small outdoor patio, this is the place for families, large boisterous groups of students or sports enthusiasts, and just folks looking for a lively time. Noisy, but fun if you know what to expect. Parking.

Jimmy Bean's 87
 1290 6th St. at Gilman 528-3435

A very informal cafe brought to us by the owners of Lalime's. Open only for breakfast and lunch. The menu has wonderfully flavored soups, salads, sandwiches, and quesadillas, as well as omelets, fruits and drinks. Prices are moderate. Located near a number of discount outlet stores, and usually not too crowded. There are a few outdoor tables for those who want to watch the traffic go by.

Picante Taqueria 88
 1328 6th St. south of Gilman 525-3121

Out of the way, but still very popular, with a wide choice of burritos, tacos, quesadillas, tostadas, and other platos. There's beer as well as wine margaritas. The cooking is fairly westernized, and the spicing pretty mild. Prices are moderate, and there is a fun informal atmosphere. Order at the counter, sit and enjoy. There's a lovely patio for sunny lunches. Also good for take out. Dress down for this place!

Kensington Bistro 89
 Colusa Circle in Kensington 525-1350

A family owned, nicely decorated informal two level space which features good Italian Mediterranean food at moderate prices. Well priced wine and beer, too. This is a fine place for anyone wanting a neighborhood atmosphere, friendly service, and a variety of choices. Parking is easily available on the street.

Kensington Circus

90

Colusa Circle in Kensington

524-8814

A British restaurant with a very informal atmosphere, a varied menu, good salads, hamburgers, shepherd's pie, and fish and chips. There's a nice pub type bar on the premises too, with a dart board. This is especially child friendly, complete with toys. Prices are moderate. A very likable, comfortable place, in an out of the way spot.

Pacific East Mall

91

3288 Pierce St. on the Bay side of Albany Hill 527-3000

Forget the airline ticket and get yourself to this huge Asian Mall to experience culture shock cheaply. At the center is an immense supermarket with completely unfamiliar items, a busy take out counter as well as a fish market where you can choose a whole fish and have it fried to order! There are restaurants with food from all over Asia. In the same parking lot is Daimo, a wonderful Chinese place with a huge traditional menu. Don't miss this experience!

Authors

92

<http://www-RNC.lbl.gov/Restaurants/>

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Index

Ajanta 67
Albany Bistro 77
Barney's Hamburgers 55
Bay Street Emeryville 43
Beauregard's 78
Beckett's Irish Pub 17
Bendean 71
Bette's Ocean View Diner 47
Bistro Lucille 61
Bosphorus 36
Britt-Marie's Wine Bar 79
Bucci's 41
Cactus Taqueria 68
Café Cacao 40
Café de la Paz 54
Café Rouge 48
Cancún 20
César 60
Cha Am 57
Chaat Cafe 32
Cheese Board Pizza 62
Chez Panisse 58
Chez Panisse Upstairs Café 59
China Village 80
Cugini 72
Downtown 25
Eccolo 46
Emeryville Market 42
Fat Apple's 64
Fonda 74
Genki 37
Gioia Pizzeria 84
Great China 18
Grégoire 56
Hua-Hin 16
Jimmy Bean's 87
Juan's Place 39
Jupiter 21
Kathmandu 76
Kensington Bistro 89
Kensington Circus 90
Khana Peena 66
King Tsin 70
Kirala 5
La Mediterranee 8
La Note 14
La Rose Bistro 26
Lalime's Cafe 85
Le Régal 24
Le Théâtre 31
Liaison 30
Locanda Olmo 10
Mel's Diner 19
Nizza La Bella 83
North Side 52
O Chame 45
Pacific East Mall 91
Picante Taqueria 88
Pomegranate 35
Pyramid Brewery 86
Raphael 23
Rick and Ann's 9
Rivoli 73
Santa Fe Bistro 22
Saul's Delicatessen 63
Shen Hua 7
Skates on the Bay 50
Solano Grill and Bar 81
Spenger's Fresh Fish Grotto 44
Sugata 82
Tacubaya 49
Taiwan 27
Tandor Kitchen 4
Thai Delight 53
Trattoria La Siciliana 11
Triple Rock Brewery 29
TukTukThai 13
Unicorn 3
Vanni 38
Venezia 34
Venus 15
Walker's Pie Shop 75
Zachary's Chicago Pizza 69
Zatar 28
Zax Tavern 6